

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-41 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification and claims 15, 19, 20, 31 and 34-36 have been amended solely to correct minor informalities therein. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16, 22-28 and 41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,509,900 issued to Ohsawa et al. (hereinafter "Ohsawa"). The rejected is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

With regard to claim 1, page 2 of the Office Action states that Steps S300-S306 of Figure 3 of Ohsawa disclose a block of programming which acts as a controller to control a condition where one of the conditions is the amount of memory space available on the high speed HDD retrieval system. Applicant respectfully submits that the condition (i.e. the amount of memory space available on the high speed HDD retrieval system) of Ohsawa is not a condition for each image provider, as recited in claim 1. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose an image storage comprising the combination of features recited in claim 1 including, inter alia, a controller that controls a condition for each image provider in storing the digital image in accordance with the recorder. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose all the features of claim 1, as well as all the features of claims 2-16, which depend from claim 1.

With regard to claim 22, page 4 of the Office Action refers to the remarks set forth for claim 1. For at least the reasons discussed above with regard to claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose a method of facilitating the circulation of digital image data stored in a memory comprising the combination of features recited in claim 22 including, inter alia, controlling a condition for each image provider in storing the digital image in accordance with the history of the order for the digital image data of the image

provider. In addition, Applicant respectfully submits that nowhere does the Office Action identify the teachings of Ohsawa which correspond to the steps of informing a plurality of image users of the digital image data and accepting orders from an image user for a digital image data, as recited in claim 22. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose all the features of claim 22 as well as all the features of claim 23 which depends from claim 22.

With regard to claim 24, page 4 of the Office Action refers to the remarks for claims 1 and 8, and the remarks for claim 8 state that the users (100, 101) of Figure 1 of Ohsawa are the searchers that search for image data. Applicant respectfully submits that user 1 100 and user 2 101 designate the names and hierarchy numbers of images requested through an image server 102 via a network (column 2, lines 17-19.) Thus, user 1 100 and user 2 101 are not searchers that search the memory for a digital image data fulfilling a given condition set on the history recorded by the recorder, as recited in claim 24. Further, Applicant submits that nowhere does Ohsawa disclose such a feature. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose all the features of claim 24, as well as all the features of claims 25-28, which depend from claim 24.

With regard to claim 41, Applicant respectfully submits that nowhere does the Office Action identify the teachings of Ohsawa which correspond to the features recited in claim 41. Further, Applicant submits that nowhere does Ohsawa disclose a data storage comprising the combination of features recited in claim 41, including, inter alia, a controller that controls a condition for each provider in storing the digital data in accordance with the recorder. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that Ohsawa fails to disclose all the features of claim 41.

It is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-16, 22-28 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be withdrawn.

Claims 17-21 and 29-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ohsawa in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,421,141 issued to Nishikawa. The rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

With regard to claims 17-21, Applicant submits that Nishikawa fails to overcome the deficiencies of Ohsawa, as discussed above with regard to claim 1, from which claims 17-21 depend because Nishikawa also fails to disclose an image storage comprising the combination of features recited in claim 1 including, inter alia, a controller that controls a condition for each image provider in storing the digital image in accordance with the recorder. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose or suggest all the features of claims 17-21.

With regard to claim 29, Applicant respectfully submits that column 10, lines 39-43 of Nishikawa, which are identified on page 6 of the Office Action, disclose a printer selector 515 which selects only one printer to be used in the system, from among a plurality of drivers in a printer driver group 519. A profile manager 518 can derive the corresponding profile in a profile information group 520, by referring to the selection information in the printer control manager 517, where in such a profile, information representing the color reproduction gamut of each printer has been stored or described (col. 10, lines 43-47). Thus, Nishikawa merely discloses a selection of the driver of a printer based on the desired color reproduction capabilities. Nowhere does Nishikawa disclose the combination of features recited in claim 29 including, inter alia, a selector that selects one of a plurality of types of printers for producing a print of a digital image data in accordance with an order from an image user. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose all the features of claim 29, as well as all the features of claim 30, which depends from claim 29.

With regard to claims 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 40, Applicant submits that nowhere does the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa disclose the step of proposing a plurality of optional digital image data for selection and the step of accepting the selections, as recited in claims 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 40. Page 5 of the Office Action states that within the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa, the "proposer" is the database of images on the HDD drive of Ohsawa and the "acceptor" is the image server of Ohsawa. The object of Ohsawa is to disclose an image management apparatus which increases the cache hit ratio of a requested image and shortens the users average waiting time (Abstract). Thus, in Ohsawa, the user specifically requests an image and thus, no images are proposed and accordingly, there is no "accepting" step. Accordingly, nowhere does Ohsawa disclose the step of proposing a plurality of optional digital image data for selection and the step of accepting the selections, as recited in claims 31, 34, 35, 37, 39 and 40.

Further, with regard to claims 31 and 37, nowhere does the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa disclose the step of deciding on a mass production of printer matter in accordance with the accepted selections. Page 6 of the Office Action states that the deciding step is accomplished by the printer selection algorithm of Nishikawa; however, as discussed above, the printer selector 515 of Nishikawa merely selects one printer to be used in the system from among a plurality of drivers in a printer driver group 519. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose all the features of claims 31 and 37, as well as all the features of claims 32, 33 and 38, which depend from claims 31 and 37, respectively.

Further, with regard to claims 35 and 40, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose or suggest the steps of informing each image user of the total result of the selections by the image users, and allowing each image user to change the selection in view of the informed total result. In particular, Applicant submits that

nowhere does the Office Action identify the teachings of either Nishikawa or Ohsawa which correspond to the above recited steps of claims 35 and 40. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose all the features of claims 35 and 40.

With regard to claim 36, Applicant submits that nowhere does either Nishikawa or Ohsawa disclose all of the features of claim 36 including, inter alia, a container including a plurality of groups of sub-containers each keeping a plurality of sheets or print produced on one image source, respectively, a selector that selects one sheet from a sub-container of every group, respectively, the option of the sub-container among every group being depending on an order by an image user for printed matter, and a binder that binds the selected sheets into printed matter. Page 7 of the Office Action states that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Ohsawa to include the printers and printer selector of Nishikawa; however, Applicant respectfully submits that the printer selector of Nishikawa does not select one sheet from a sub-container of every group, respectively, the option of the sub-container among every group being dependent on an order by an image user for printer matter, as recited in claim 36. For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose all the features of claim 36.

For at the reasons discussed above, Applicant submits that the combination of Ohsawa and Nishikawa fails to disclose all the features of claims 17-21 and 29-40. It is requested that the rejection of claims 17-21 and 29-40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-41 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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